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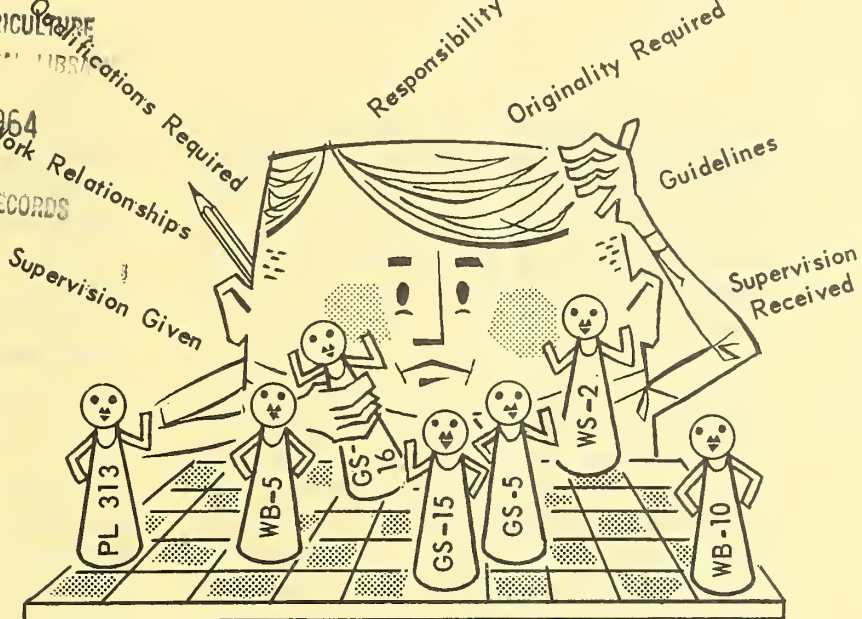
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MAR 16 1964

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THE POSITION MANAGER

Communications Center
for Classification and
Pay Specialists



Established by The Classification Council • UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Issue No. 1

July 16, 1962

Washington 25, D. C.

What's In a Title?

That part of their personnel regulations pertaining to classification and salary and wage administration is issued by the Department of the Army under the title of "Position and Pay Management." Our title--"The Position Manager"--derives from theirs.

We shall have more to say about Position and Pay Management in this and future issues of the "Manager." The concept embodied in the phrase presents a challenge, and as a title it comes closer, perhaps, to identifying the interests we serve and the purpose of our work than does the longer, more pedestrian "classification and salary and wage administration." Also, it rolls off the tongue somewhat easier than the longer phrase does, so that, everything considered, it should not be hard to adopt as a substitute.

Position and Pay Management Roster

Enclosed in this issue is a list of names in which we think you will be interested.

These are your USDA colleagues in position and pay management work, and their respective agencies and duty stations. We suggest that you keep the list handy, since it will help you identify correspondents whose articles or communications will appear in future issues. We have tried to make the list complete with respect to personnel management specialists engaged full time or substantially full time on classification and salary-wage work. All others have been purposely excluded, but this does not mean that circulation of the "Manager" will be restricted to persons whose names are on this list.

We solicit your advice about corrections or additions that should be made to complete, correct, and keep the list up to date.

Latest on the Pay Reform Bill

Increases ranging from 7 per cent at the bottom to 15 per cent at the top and a substantial increase in the number of supergrades available to the departments and agencies are what those who think

they can read the mind of Congress are predicting will be approved now, effective July 1. They also say it may be the first of September before action is finally taken. But we have heard so many different predictions by this time that we apologize for bringing it up.

Newsletter As a Communications Center

"Communications center" is what we call it in our sub-title, and communications center is what we hope it will be. But the doubters ask, can a newsletter prepared in a national headquarters office by an editorial body located there be issued to convey information in more than one direction so as to be a real "communications center"? The answer depends on the need for exchange of ideas, the ability of the editors to persuade a sufficient number of their readers to serve as correspondents, and the willingness of the editors to publish the contributions they may then receive.

If you think the need to exchange ideas exists, write to us about that. Write about your professional reading, your professional training needs and accomplishments, your professional contacts - all in relation to position and pay management, of course. Write about projects you are starting, including informational pamphlets or guides you may be engaged in preparing; about your participation in surveys; about staff visits and visits to or from non-USDA agencies; about the impact of CSC and other inspections and audits on your work. Or write to raise questions about any phase of your work, or to make suggestions about changes and new departures in position and pay management in which you are interested.

Write to us about personnel research and development work that you or others may have started in your state or region which has some application to classification, pay management, occupational standards, or manpower utilization activities.

Think about case material you can send us to help in establishing, through the "Position Manager," a position and pay management clinic.

Keep us informed about staff changes in your particular work area--they make good personal items for which we shall try to find room in each issue.

Write about anything else in the position and pay management field which occurs to you and you would like to see published. The editors will have to exercise some of the privileges that pertain to their office, of course, so that everything they receive may not find its way into print, or may be printed only after some editing; but this should not prevent any of you from writing to them--at least once!

As long as we continue issuing a news sheet like this one, you will have an excuse to write. So make a habit of it. We will try to meet you half way.

Classification Council: The Present Organization

Reestablished January 9, 1962, the Council is now comprised of these members: Joe Lott, AMS; LeRoy Sykes, ARS; Charles Potter, ASCS; Hazel Leary, FAS; Milton Arnold, FHA; Perry Hinkelman, FS; Jim Lewis, MOS; Lou Mayola, REA; and Tom Gardiner, SCS.

Members are appointed by the Director of Personnel. They meet at the call of the Chief, Classification and Standards Division, in the Office of Personnel. Their advice and counsel is sought on position and pay management problems and projects of interagency concern within the Department.

Continuing activities of the Council will be carried on by committees. The one

to plan meetings for the Council is already selected. Joe O'Mara, AMS, Mildred Rasmussen, FS, and Mert Severinson, ARS, are its present members. This committee will plan four meetings a year. Three will be for agency specialists in the Washington area. The fourth will be a two-day conference to which agencies will be encouraged to bring in as many position and pay management staff members from their field offices as work and funds will permit. This Department-wide conference will normally be held in the winter in Washington, probably in January or February, and will be timed to accommodate agency plans for holding similar Washington meetings on agency-based agenda for their own headquarters and field office staffs.

The committee on meetings invites all of you to start accumulating ideas, big and small, for consideration at the winter conference now. Any that you would like to have dropped into a meeting of the Classification Council for its information and consideration may be sent to any one of the Council members or to the Chief, Classification and Standards Division, Office of Personnel, who will see that it gets the proper exposure.

The Position and Pay Management Concept

The Civilian Personnel Staff at Headquarters, Second Army, has developed and is promoting this concept. A report it has issued on the subject points out that position classifiers are required to review many positions annually and obtain, as a result, an extraordinary wealth of information about everything from employee attitudes and behavior to uneconomical organization design and good or poor workforce utilization. But to what purpose? Primarily to ascertain the accuracy of job descriptions, prepare new descriptions if necessary, and put positions in their appropriate grades. Traditionally, they have been given little opportunity to do more with what they learn.

Second Army determined that it could build a new element of service into its personnel management program, based on the wide knowledge classifiers have of positions, organizations, and the people in them. It planned to do this by training classifiers to give managers and supervisors more personalized management advice and counsel than was customary, not only on such matters as providing and maintaining accurate job descriptions but also on understanding organizational patterns and relationships, determining or estimating job costs by occupational and organization entities, meeting employee needs for training and other development activities, determining and establishing appropriate supervisory ratios, and effecting improvements in the utilization of the workforce. It gave this concept of personalized service the new name of "Position and Pay Management." Its report on the subject explains:

At first, research had to be conducted. A pilot Personnel Office was selected for experimentation. The mechanics for implementing the concept consisted of documenting all observations made while in the process of conducting a normal scheduled position classification survey of each organization. These observations were then studied to determine whether there were any items of significant interest or value for consideration by management. If significant items were found, a report was prepared and addressed to the head of the organization surveyed. This report, written in an informal manner, was treated as privileged information between the Personnel Office and the organization head. This placed the Position and Pay Management Analyst in the role of informal staff man of the organization itself who could be relied upon to provide information useful as reinforcers in improving the organization as a whole.

Comments in the reports prepared by the Position and Pay Management Analyst are very specific. Satisfactory situations as well as problems or potential problems are indicated. Employees involved in any of the situations are identified by name. At the end of each report, suggestions and recommendations are offered to improve the organization. In this way, the organization is placed in perspective from the personnel job management point of view. Management has learned since this new approach has been used that it is now receiving the kind of information it had wanted and which it can use to obtain greater economy of position structure, increased productivity, greater skill utilization, refinements in job design, improved employee motivation, and reduced labor costs.

All of which sounds like something some personnel officer or classification chief in USDA should have thought of first. Maybe one of you did. The question is, what are you ready to do with the idea now? Our friends at Second Army Headquarters will not object to others taking up the idea, breathing more life into it, and making it as much a vehicle for enhancing the status of classification and pay specialists as they can.

If you think USDA should be doing something about this, send us your views. Additional discussion of the matter seems desirable as a prelude to such further action as we may wish to take.

Something New in Position Classification

As reported by Thomas Nelson in his article in the April-June, 1962, issue of the Civil Service Journal, the "something new" is SCCP, which stands for Supervisor-centered Classification Program in the Air Force. The program gives "the man who has the authority to assign responsibilities to a job (the supervisor)... the authority to classify that job."

To quote from the article, at the inception of the program, two restrictions were imposed: "the cost of position classification must not increase; the acceptable standard of compliance with law and regulation must be maintained." Two years of experiment have proved there are five advantages: "(1) Immediate improvement in interest in and acceptance of classification as a management tool; (2) shorter, more specific position descriptions; (3) a decrease in the overall time required to audit positions; (4) fewer oral and written explanations required and fewer appeals made; and (5) improvement in the understanding and use of position classification in the management process."

A number of trouble spots have also appeared. "(1) A marked increase in training time for both the supervisor and personnel technician; (2) problems concerned with obtaining additional copies of classification standards and maintaining files; (3) the necessity to develop more precise processing procedures; and (4) the necessity to develop review procedures to insure uniform application of standards and procedures."

Evaluations of the program so far reveal no deterioration in the accuracy of classification decisions as a result of the changes, and a marked improvement in understanding and acceptance of position classification by employees and supervisors. "Supervisors have found that they themselves now have a much better understanding of position classification, of their role in the assignment of duties to a position, of organizational structure and lines of authority, and of their own supervisory responsibilities in general."

Before embarking on anything like SCCP, an agency must have planned a good program for training supervisors to understand and properly use position classification principles and processes. Earlier studies of the need for this kind

of training indicate that it should be aimed at providing a clearer understanding of the present law, regulations, and policies governing position classification and how they apply to the positions involved in a particular agency. It should also give due emphasis to effective work planning and proper workforce utilization, since these both are basic to the accomplishment of sound position classification. And, finally, it should provide practical guides on how to write position descriptions.

We believe some of you may have already developed outlines for this kind of training. If you have, will you please send a copy to Classification and Standards Division in the Office of Personnel for its use in establishing a clearinghouse of position and pay management materials.

More on the Man-in-Job Concept

Classification standards making use of this concept or of something very close to it are identified in the lead article in the May 1962 issue of "Classification News," published by the Bureau of Programs and Standards of the Civil Service Commission, as including:

1. The Secretary standard, published in April 1959
2. The standard for the General Attorney Series, published in October, 1959
3. The Guide for Evaluation of Positions in Basic and Applied Research, published in June 1960
4. The standard for Personnel Officer, published in August 1961
5. The standard for Museum Curator, published in February 1962

While the article traces the history of the concept back to the days of the first

Personnel Classification Board to show that it is not something radically new and states that it should be considered "in any situation where it is appropriate, whether or not the standard specifically provides for it," we suspect there is more to explain its present popularity than that.

The reason, we think, lies in the use that has been made of the concept in one standard in particular--the Guide for Evaluation of Positions in Basic and Applied Research--and in the results obtained from application of that standard to the positions to which it relates. The concept is one of four evaluation factors described in the Guide. It is given twice the weight of any other factor and may range from a low of 6 to a high of 20 degrees, depending on the incumbent, his reputation and accomplishments. The weight it is given in any particular case is determined by a panel, of which all but one member (in the practice of the Department of Agriculture, at least) are the incumbent's peers--professional men from the same program area.

The side effects as well as the direct results obtained from this method of classifying positions seem to have been uniformly good. No other standard, as far as we know, permits the incumbent's qualifications to be considered to the extent that they are in the Guide for Evaluating Research Positions, and no other standard involves operating officials in the evaluation process to the extent this one does. So when personnel offices begin to receive recommendations to extend the man-in-job concept to "other positions," what is meant, we presume, is that more standards should be written to secure, when applied, results like those we are getting through application of the Research Guide. The article in Classification News, on the other hand, serves as reminder that other methods of applying the concept may be more appropriate when dealing with other occupational groups.

The Literature of Position and Pay Management: May-June 1962

As indexed by the Civil Service Commission in its monthly bibliography of personnel literature, periodicals that it received in this period carried only three articles on position classification. One of these is worth noting - the one volume "Basic Course in Position Classification," published by the Eleventh Region of the Commission, Seattle, Washington, apparently in connection with an inter-agency training program held earlier this year. The annotation indicates that the publication "presents cases for study, analysis and evaluation in a variety of classification areas," with solutions included.

As far as gross number of listings during this period is concerned, articles on organization and management lead all the rest. There are 30 of these in the CSC bibliographies. Salary administration comes next, with 26 entries, but many of these are only reports of special salary or wage surveys of no particular interest to Federal personnel specialists. One item listed in the June bibliography is worth writing for, however, and that is the 124-page report of the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service (H. rpt. no. 1606, 87th Cong.) entitled "The Federal Executive Pay Act of 1956 and the Classification Act of 1949, as amended and supplemented, and related provisions of law." If it is not too late,

we shall try to obtain extra copies of this report to distribute as widely as possible through your classification chiefs, since we know from examination that it is a useful reference volume.

The O&M items feature several articles on PERT, and include nine books. Since there is probably no more profitable reading than that which one finds in the O&M field for classifiers out to increase their knowledge and abilities as position and pay management specialists, we encourage your cultivating an omnivorous taste for such items as these. If any of you will take the time to prepare and submit them, we will be delighted to receive accounts from time to time of your reading experience in this field.

Interest Questionnaire for Future Position and Pay Management Meetings

Joe O'Mara, AMS, has developed a list of suggested subjects for presentation or discussion at Department-wide meetings that the Classification Council will sponsor in the future. Joe's list is reprinted below. There is space at the end for adding other subjects you may wish to suggest. If you will mark and return this list now to indicate the two or three subjects you feel would make the best items to put on the rest of this year's meeting agendas, including the winter conference, the program committee will then have what it needs for developing the kind of agendas the majority wants.



Select two or three of the following that you feel would make interesting subjects to discuss at future Position and Pay Management Meetings. Mark 1, 2, and 3 in the margin to show the priority you would give them, and return the list to Classification and Standards Division, Office of Personnel. Signature not required.

- _____ Adequate staffing of classification offices
- _____ Less paperwork in classification
- _____ How to improve position classification review
- _____ Shortcuts and methods of simplifying the classification process
- _____ How to achieve maximum utilization of classification staffs
- _____ Classification training programs for supervisors and employees, including promotional material
- _____ Techniques and methods for self-evaluation of the classification program
- _____ How to improve communications in classification
- _____ Methods and techniques of promoting classification as an integral part of management
- _____ Methods and techniques for studying proposed CSC standards drafts
- _____ Classification of positions above the first-line, full-scope supervisor
- _____ Job evaluation by ADP: current issues and outlook
- _____ More effective classification through delegating authority to supervisors to make basic grade determinations
- _____ The relationship of classification to organization and manpower utilization

Any other subject or subjects you would like to suggest:

